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THE Trinity Choral Society's last Concert of the season took place at the Architectural Gallery, on Thursday evening, the 11th ult. The programme included Mendelssohn's *Hear my prayer*, several favourite Part-songs, and Romberg's Symphony for Toy Instruments. The artists were—Miss Fanny Holland, Mdle. Marie Gondi, Mdle. Spagnoletti, Mr. Alfred Hemming, Mr. Ralph Wilkinson, Herr Wilhelm Ganz, Herr Willem Coenen, and Mr. J. W. Elliott. Mr. Albert Lowe conducted.

MR. HENRY BAUMER gave his final Amateur Soirée Musicale for this season, at the Concert Hall, Store Street, on Thursday evening, the 9th ult., before a numerous audience. Mr. Baumer's vocal classes executed with much success, a selection from *Der Freischütz* (forming the first part of the Concert), and a variety of choruses, part-songs, and solos. Mr. Baumer and Mr. G. F. Goodban played with much effect the overture as a duet for the pianoforte, and also accompanied on the harmonium and pianoforte. The Concert being a private one, the names of the singers were not stated in the book of words; but we may mention that the song "Beautiful May" (from G. A. Macfarren's Cantata *May-Day*), Benedict's variations on the *Carnival of Venice*, a chorus, "Gipsy Life," by Schumann, and a trio, "O Memory," by Henry Leslie, were exceedingly well given.

MR. LANSDOWNE COTTELL'S third, and last, Matinée, took place at the Store Street Rooms, on Wednesday, the 22nd ult. The Concert was supported by Signor Caravoglia, and about twenty of Mr. Cottell's pupils, amongst whom may be mentioned, two very successful *debutantes*, Mdle. Marie Villiers, and Signorina Gioletto Vendura. Sidney Smith's "Fantasia," *Les Huguenots*, arranged as a pianoforte duet, was well played by Mrs. Lansdowne Cottell and Miss Philippa Villiers; and Mr. Reginald Soppitt was highly effective in the song of "The Wanderer," by Hesco. The conductors were Herr Lehmeier and Mr. Lansdowne Cottell, who has determined to establish an English Opera Company, owing to the success of his Matinées. The Concert was well attended.

A small pamphlet has been forwarded to us from New York, containing a sketch of the life and career of Madame Parepa-Rosa. Her success as a first-class vocalist in America appears to outlive most of those artists who obtain so sudden a reputation in a strange country; and we much doubt whether her newly-acquired friends will now be prevailed upon to part with her.

We have received the Report and Balance-Sheet of the Worcester Festival Choral Society for the year 1867-8, by which it appears that, although the subscription to the Concerts has been recently raised, and the number of subscribers thereby reduced, the current expenses of the year have been more than met. The Committee has now taken in hand the restoration of the organ, which formerly stood in the Music Hall; and propose that as soon as the instrument is freed from debt, a resolution shall be passed which shall secure it for the permanent public advantage of the City, "and for the use of any subsequent Society, having the same or similar musical object as at present, which may succeed this Society in case of its dissolution."

Reviews.

NOVELLO, EWER AND CO.

Novello's Parish Choir Book. A collection of Music for the Service of the Church, by Modern Composers.

This important collection of Church Music is prefaced by the following remarks:—

"The Committee of the Ely Diocesan Church Music Society, finding that one of the principal desiderata amongst parish choirs was an arrangement, or rather se-

veral arrangements, of the *Te Deum laudamus*, adapted especially for country churches, determined to endeavour to supply the want.

"Accordingly they put themselves in communication with some of the most eminent Church-music composers, and also with Messrs. Novello, Ewer and Co. Several composers entered into their views, and Messrs. Novello, Ewer and Co. expressed themselves as being willing to co-operate heartily in the work.

"The compositions which are now offered to Church choirs and the public generally, are the first fruits of the effort made by the Ely Diocesan Church Music Society; it will be understood, however, that each composition is to be regarded as resting upon its own merits, and that the Society claims no other share in the work than the credit of having first conceived the idea, and put in motion the machinery by which it has been produced. It may be added that, in the belief of the Society, the names of the composers may be regarded as a sufficient guarantee for the character of the music."

The first paragraph of this preface strikes us as containing a statement which, admitting it to be true, is somewhat short of the whole truth. No doubt, "one of the principal desiderata amongst parish choirs was, and is, a number of settings of the *Te Deum laudamus*." But do not parish choirs occasionally experience a desire to give a musical rendering to the remainder of the Canticles, to say nothing of the Communion office?

Messrs. Novello appear to have thought so, for we find a few of the *Te Deums* have been supplemented by the remaining Canticles, and published as a complete service, Morning, Evening, and Communion. If we were willing to admit that parish choirs have no desire for any musical setting of the Canticles other than that to the *Te Deum*, all we can say is, they ought to have; and the same arguments which serve to prove a setting necessary to the *Te Deum*, apply with equal force to the other Canticles and anthems. It is possible we may be doing an injustice to the Ely Committee in supposing that they did not intend carrying out their suggestion to its legitimate conclusion; for they certainly speak of the present collection as the first fruits of their efforts; let us therefore hope, for the sake of parish choirs, that this implies a promise of the complete fulfilment of their task. That Messrs. Novello have carried out what we presume to be their part of the bargain is abundantly manifest. Whether the thirty odd composers have done themselves credit individually, or added any lustre to their art collectively, is a matter which we now propose to look into. The Ely Committee cautiously decline to render themselves responsible for the correctness of the harmonies, or the appropriateness of the settings; but they add a record to the effect, that they suppose the names of the composers might be regarded as a guarantee for the character of the music; which remark is, at the same time, innocent and refreshing.

Seriously, however, a musician who designs to give a musical illustration to the noble thoughts contained in this Hymn to the Creator, takes upon himself a task of no little responsibility and importance. First of all, his desire to give the text an adequate interpretation is balanced on the other side by the necessity of making the composition as short as possible. In like manner, any desire to give an ornate rendering could only result in placing the composition altogether out of the reach of that class of choir for which it was distinctly intended. Consequently, every composer starts weighted with the following responsibility, viz., the music must be *short and easy*. To gain these points our composers have made use of three different modes. First, there is the four-part arrangement, the outcome of those who consider that country singers prefer to sing in parts, even if it involve an extra amount of labour in getting up the music. Then there is the unison treatment, projected by those who, without caring what singers like or dislike, hold their own theories; one of the strongest

of which is, that unison-singing is the only method by which congregational worship can be thoroughly carried out. They also hold that an unison treatment offers unusual facilities to the use of a free organ-part—which latter fact gives the composer a wider scope for the display of his inventive faculties. Thirdly, there is the chant-form, sometimes in unison, and sometimes in four-part harmony. As with everything else, there is a good deal to be said in favour of this system by its promoters; and no doubt they use their strongest argument when they lay claim to the fact of its being the simplest of all forms. Of these three, the most musicianly in our opinion is undoubtedly the unison treatment as (in theory, if not in practice) it is the most complete. Organ playing is at this time making rapid strides throughout the country. The man who used to be famous for his rendering of the Kyrie from Mozart's *Twelfth Mass*, or Handel's *Pastoral Symphony*, stands no chance of recognition now, as a performer, unless he is capable of decently working his way through a sonata of Mendelssohn, or a fugue of Bach; consequently there is no fear of overtaxing the capabilities of a country organist of the present day by anything that could be put in the accompaniment of a service for parish choirs. This fact, in itself, offers a wide scope to the composer; and when we add that the voice-part gains additional effect from numbers, without any special reference to the individual capability of those numbers, we think we have adduced sufficient arguments to prove that it is the most intrinsically valuable in practice as well as theory. Undoubtedly there are other disadvantages in the four-part arrangements, for in addition to the difficulty of singing in parts, they entirely preclude the possibility of any aid being rendered by the congregation. The *dictum*, that no member of a congregation, other than a musician, should join in harmonized singing, has as much force now as it ever had. And speaking with regard to congregational worship in ordinary parish churches, four-part music is as decidedly repellant as unison is the reverse. Under those circumstances it appears curious that so large a majority of the thirty composers, whose names are here given, should have chosen the four-part setting in preference to the unison; but when we remember that singers prefer to sing in parts, without caring one jot what the effect may be, even with the addition of the inevitable congregational adornments—men growling the air an octave below the proper pitch, and women improvising a "second," some notes above the melody—the extra demand for part music caused by this mistaken notion naturally produces an extra supply.

Against the liberality displayed in the selection of composers to carry out this important work, not a word can be said; it includes the name of almost every English composer now living, who has made any mark in the music of the Church, in addition to some few who have yet to do so. Cathedral, Collegiate, Parish and district Church organists, musical amateurs, clerical and lay—together with one or two whose achievements have been rather in connection with secular than with sacred music—it seems difficult to imagine how the list could have been extended with any advantage; to our mind it is quite exhaustive.

As we now propose to sit in judgment on these compositions, it would be well to give some preliminary notion of the means by which we propose testing them. We have already expressed an opinion on the necessity of their being moderately easy, and decidedly taking in character; that is, melodious without being weak, and rich in harmony without being needlessly chromatic; we consider also, that as they are the productions of people living in the 19th century, they should be modern in notation and feeling. That, as living painters do not consider it necessary to copy the angularity of Van Eyck, or poets the obsolete phraseology of Chaucer, so musical men should reject the absurd notion that in writing for the Church, the peculiarities of Tye, Byrd, Tallis and Gib-

bons, should be carefully reproduced. Surely the Chinese blunders in the way of an inartistic reproduction of old works by our ablest architects, ought to act as a warning against this unfortunately too general mistake. We must consider that in the endeavour to be simple and easy, the composer should never forget he is an artist, and as such is bound to throw as much feeling into his work as he is able, without injuring the clearness and simplicity of the whole. Nothing, perhaps, in the entire range of Psalms and Hymns of praise can equal the *Te Deum laudamus* in loftiness of thought, or variety of expression. Therefore, as a mere vehicle for musical exposition, it is most valuable; but, if considered as an offering from the being to the Creator, the vastness of the work is increased materially. This view of the question can hardly be overestimated, and we commend the thought to the thousand-and-one tyros who worry the lives out of musical men of standing, by sending small compositions which they sometimes modestly hint "might do for a Sanctus." Great heavens! do they suppose that the Eternal Song, sung by "Angels and Archangels, and all the company of heaven," can be adequately represented by the arrangement of trash, when the inspired genius of Beethoven failed to encompass it. That such thoughts as these should sink deeply into the hearts of church-musicians is absolutely necessary before anything can be produced deserving the name of sacred music. Whether these considerations have had any influence in the production of these *Te Deums* we must now ascertain.

(To be continued.)

Chant de L'Espérance. Melodie pour Piano. Par J. Schiffmacher.

A PLACID melody, sung with the thumb of the right hand, and afterwards given to the fourth finger, with a triplet accompaniment. The treatment of this composition is marked with extreme elegance in every phrase. The lingering upon the Dominant, before the return to the subject, has an excellent effect; and the *coda*, with a reminiscence of the opening theme, is thoroughly in character with the sentiment of the piece.

Phillis. Allegro for the Pianoforte.

A Frolic. Scherzo for the Pianoforte.

Both composed by J. Baptiste Calkin.

THESE pieces, although light in character, are distinguished by a musicianlike treatment, which removes them from the "Morceau de Salon" style, so unfortunately prevalent in the present day. "*Phillis*" opens with a melodious subject in G major, harmonized with much skill. This theme, often repeated throughout the composition, is freed from monotony by the variety of harmony with which it is associated; and many of the transient modulations are as pleasing as they are ingenious. The piece must be carefully and intelligently studied by a pianist; but it will amply repay the trouble bestowed upon it. The second on our list, "*A Frolic*," is a light and playful *Scherzo*, by no means easy to play with the delicacy of touch which the subject demands; the extended *arpeggios* in the left hand requiring more watchfulness than is usually demanded in pianoforte music merely written for sale. The passages are extremely refined; and where the grace of the composer can be reflected by the performer, the piece cannot fail to please.

O Mother dear, Good Night. Serenade. Composed by B. Tours.

A GOOD contralto singer would make this song highly effective; the pathetic words, translated by Dr. H. W. Dulcken, from the German of L. Uhland, being intensified by the thoughtful music of Mr. Tours. We might have desired a little less of the numerous chromatic progressions in the accompaniment to so simple a theme; but on the whole it is carefully harmonized. We perceive that the *Serenade* has been sung by Madame Patey-Whytock; and feel certain that the composer could have no more able exponent of his music.